

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Announces Recipient of Funding for Colorectal Cancer Pilot Project

BISMARCK, N.D. – Heart of America Medical Center in Rugby, N.D., is the recipient of a grant to fund the 2008-2009 Colorectal Cancer Screening Initiative, a cancer screening pilot project, according to Joyce Sayler, program director with the North Dakota Department of Health's Comprehensive Cancer Prevention and Control Program.

The 2007 North Dakota Legislative Assembly appropriated \$200,000 for the development of a colorectal cancer screening pilot project for low-income North Dakotans. The goal of the project is to assist in eliminating health disparities among minority populations, the underinsured and the uninsured by providing free colorectal cancer screening to as many as 300 eligible participants and to provide screening education to the public. The project is administered by the North Dakota Department of Health.

"Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cancer killer in the United States, as well as in North Dakota – but it doesn't have to be," Sayler said. "Although research has shown that colorectal cancer screening for people 50 and older can significantly reduce mortality, North Dakota's screening rate remains low. We are hoping this pilot project will help us reach residents of Rugby and surrounding areas who may not otherwise have the tests done and to learn how best to educate North Dakotans about the importance of screenings."

According to the 2004 North Dakota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, only 44 percent of North Dakota men and women older than 50 reported they had ever received colorectal cancer screening. Colorectal cancer was the third most common cancer diagnosed among North Dakota men and women, averaging 406 new cases and 120 deaths annually.

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“The Heart of America Medical Center is looking forward to working with the North Dakota Department of Health and the North Dakota Cancer Coalition to pilot the Colorectal Cancer Screening Initiative in north central North Dakota,” said Jerry Jurena, Heart of America Medical Center CEO. “We are excited to have the opportunity to provide education, awareness and screenings for colorectal cancer.”

For more information, contact Joyce Saylor, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2333, or Jerry Jurena, Heart of America Medical Center, at 776.5455 ext. 2218.

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